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PEQUOT TRAILS

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY IN THE SPRING, SUMMER, FALL AND WINTER
BY THE PEQUOT-SEPOS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, MYSTIC, CONNECTICUT

Volume II

Winter, 1950

Number 4

The Next Three Audubon Screen Tour Lecturers:



"The Riddle of Migration"

ROGER TORY PETERSON
Buell Hall, New London
January 18, 8:00 p.m.



"Trails For the Millions"

ALLAN CRUICKSHANK
Ward Sr. High School, Westerly
February 1, 8:00 p.m.



"Beneath Buckeye Skies"

KARL MASLOWSKI
Buell Hall, New London
March 4, 3:00 p.m.

Nationally Known Speakers Head Screen Tour Programs

The second of five seasonal Screen Tours is scheduled for Thursday evening, January 18, at Buell Hall, New London, with Roger Tory Peterson speaking on "The Riddle of Migration." Artist, scientist, and author of the recently-published "Birds of America," Mr. Peterson has also written numerous other natural-history books and field guides. He is equally famous for talented illustrations and photography. The subject of his lecture is the mysterious, urgent instinct which leads birds safely across thousands of miles of skyways, as if by pre-arranged signals, in the spring and fall of each year.

"Trails for the Millions," to be presented at Westerly's Ward High School auditorium on Thursday evening, February 1, brings us Allan Cruickshank on a welcome return engagement. A popular speaker, Mr. Cruickshank's lecture with color films will introduce listeners to the abundant and varied wildlife he has studied within a mere hour's distance of New York's crowded Times Square.

For the fourth Screen Tour, Karl Maslowski will offer "Beneath Buckeye Skies" at Buell Hall on the afternoon of Sunday, March 4, at 3 p.m. Mr. Maslowski, scientist-lecturer, is a native Ohioan who has faithfully interpreted and photographed the activities of bird and animal neighbors in Ohio's quiet hills and hardwood forests. Among his most

appealing actors are woodcock, deer mouse, owls, and the "Red Skeltons," a family of red foxes and their cubs.

On Friday evening, April 13, Telford H. Work will round out the Audubon Screen Tour series with his lecture-film, "Arctic to the Tropics," at the Westerly High School. A study in contrasts, Mr. Work's presentation ranges from Lapland and Wales to the Fiji Islands in search of unusual birds, filmed in color.

This Year's School Program Underway

Again this year, as in the past, we are making a series of lectures, slides, and motion picture programs on the subject of conservation available to the schools of our communities. We have written to all the school superintendents within our area asking them to take advantage of this community service effort.

Last year hundreds of children and adults were introduced to new and fascinating phases of natural history through these efforts.

If you are a teacher, a youth leader, or member of an adult organization that would like a good program on conservation, write the Sanctuary or phone Mystic 1260.

PEQUOT TRAILS

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Editors

Mrs. Arthur M. Cottrell, Jr. and Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

A Statement of Purpose:

We want this publication to be of the utmost service to you—to keep you informed concerning activities at the Sanctuary and in your community; to invite your participation in these activities; and to provide you with general articles of education and inspiration regarding conservation subjects. Won't you drop us a line and tell us what you would like to see published? We would appreciate it.

Current Conservation Issues

An Editorial by Thomas P. McElroy, Jr.

While the Sanctuary, as an organization, has purposely avoided expressing itself in regard to conservation issues that may in some way be involved politically, we must, nevertheless, take cognizance of the fact, that we as individuals, are in some way affected by any change in conservation principles. Unless we, who understand conservation and believe in its merits, express ourselves in a manner which we believe to be right, we face the unsavory situation of having the future of our natural resources decided and controlled by those of purely selfish or political interests.

One example of this is the constant pressure on the Congress of the United States by the cattle and lumber interests in the far West. They would have our last remaining Public Lands, lands owned by you and me, exploited beyond reclamation for their own quick personal gain. These lands are now open to grazing and to timber cutting on a controlled basis. Yet this pressure group is not satisfied. They would void all controls and expose the vegetation to constant grazing and to the constantly biting teeth of the saw. They would have the land trampled by the millions of hoofs of sheep and cattle. This, as we know, paves the way for soil erosion, dust bowls, and waste land. It is not practical, therefore, that we should be interested in preserving this last virgin bit of our country which, even now, stands as a living monument to the type of West that might have been?

Regarding current conservation issues, Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, has won one favorable decision and lost another. Private enterprise proposed to dredge some 90,000,000 cubic yards of oyster shells from the Sabine National Wildlife Refuge on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana. Mr. Chapman ruled that such a procedure would make most of the refuse useless for its established purpose and was successful in defeating the proposal. However, the Bureau of Reclamation was successful in invading the Dinosaur National Monument in Utah for the purpose of constructing two dams for water and power uses. This in spite of the fact that the two dams could be constructed outside the Monument. The only hope here lies in the fact that Congress has not yet appropriated the money.

It is regrettable, but nevertheless true, that the only way we can save certain species of American wildlife from extinction is to enact laws and to set aside guarded tracts of land. Such seems to be the plight of the key deer in the Florida Keys and the bald eagle in Alaska. These tiny key deer, about two feet tall and weighing approximately 50 pounds, number between 25 and 50 in total population. The bald eagle, the living example of America's national emblem, is still common enough in Alaska to save it from extinction. Current bills for their protection warrant our consideration.

Unless we, who are interested in the future of our natural resources, express our beliefs as citizens of a free nation, we can but suffer a fate born of selfishness and ignorance.

Rocks and Rills and Native Hills

by Pauline H. Dederer

Real enthusiasts about the country can enjoy tours of discovery at all seasons of the year. What we may discover we prefer to shoot with a camera rather than a gun. Even without gun or camera, hunting may have its lucky shots if our mind's eye can be trained in marksmanship, alert to see and understand the geology of our countryside.

What can the hills, rocks, and streams tell us about themselves? There are many signs along the way. Do you know that there are young rivers—baby rivers—and Methuselahs among rivers? Heavy rains and melting snows show us in miniature on any sloping pasture how the water eats into the earth, forming a tiny river with steep banks which soon crumble away through the continued flowing of the water. Finally a broad river bed is formed, in the middle of which a thread of water, now spent in its force, trickles down to its terminus where the washed-down mud spreads out like a fan. Thus big rivers, young and old, are formed. The Connecticut River is such an old river with its worn-down banks and broad river bed.

Do you know that the hills are not "rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun?" That mountains as well as rivers may be young or old? Impressive mountain peaks—the Matterhorn, Mount Everest, the glorious Canadian giants—these are young mountains as geological time goes, a mere several million years since the earth wrinkled its face and formed the ranges of which they are a part. These upstanding ridges are weathered by the atmosphere, crumbled into fragments; large masses are cracked by the cold; then snow, ice, and rain transport the fragments to lower lands, and high ridges are then converted into plateaus and finally to plains. So the Old Testament writer was scientific as well as poetic when he said, "The valleys shall be exalted and the mountains and hills brought low."

In our own immediate environment the rocks are chiefly granite, an incredibly ancient formation, antedating the appearance of life. On top of this ancient granite, thousands of years ago, a huge ice-sheet came grinding down stopping just at Long Island, and in the course of time retreated to what is now the frozen North. What calling cards did this chilly visitor leave behind? For one thing, sand banks full of stones rounded and polished by their journey in the ice. For another, big boulders, left now high and dry upon granite ledges—tooled by the sharp stones imbedded in the immense ice sheet that moved relentlessly above them.

If you are interested in the structure of rocks, look for granite which shows well the three minerals of which it is composed: mica—flat, shining, and scaly; feldspar—hard, white or pinkish; quartz—whitish, smoky, or lavender, often in the form of beautiful large crystals.

These are some of the secrets geologists have laid bare to us, following the old poetic counsel "Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee."

Report on National Audubon Society's Annual Convention

I was privileged to represent your Sanctuary at the 46th Annual Convention of the National Audubon Society held November 11 to 14 in New York City. This was an outstanding convention in every respect, providing practical "down-to-earth" presentations and discussions on the ways of promoting the work of sanctuaries and Audubon groups.

The convention opened on Saturday morning with a welcoming address by John H. Baker, President of the National Audubon Society. This was followed by two very interesting panel discussions: "How to Organize and Lead Field Trips" and "How to Promote and Conduct a Successful Screen Tour Program." Many ideas were gleaned from both these panels and I am sure they will eventually serve as a guide for improving our endeavors in these fields.

On Saturday afternoon it was my privilege to serve on the panel concerned with "How to Establish and Maintain a Wildlife Sanctuary." Here I had the opportunity to tell representatives from all parts of our nation about our own Sanctuary. Much interest was shown in our initial means of organization and in the type of program we are conducting. Further discussions were held that afternoon on the advantages and ways of promoting attendance in Audubon Camps.

Sunday's program was devoted to an all-day field trip out Long Island to observe the birds of ponds, marshes, shores, and ocean. Leaders on the trip included Allan D. Cruickshank, Carl W. Buchheister, Joe Cadbury, Alexander Sprunt, Jr., and others of the National Audubon Society's staff. A special fleet of buses, carrying more than 200 observers, left Audubon House at 7:00 a.m., and returned slightly after 7:00 p.m. Many interesting birds were observed on the trip including such species as the Gadwall, Pintail, American Widgeon, Canada Goose, mute swan, ruddy duck, coot, black-bellied plover, gannet, white-winged scoter, American scoter, Savannah sparrow, and many others.

Of the panel discussions held on Monday, I was particularly interested in the one on "How to Build Adult Membership in Local Organizations." Other subjects covered that day included program planning, junior memberships, and publicity. Monday evening's program was held in Roosevelt Memorial Hall at the Museum of Natural History. Edwin G. Boyes, past president of the Detroit Audubon Society and Radio Engineer, Station WWJ, Detroit, demonstrated the actual techniques and equipment used in making his outstanding wildlife recordings. Allan Cruickshank presented his newest colored film "Below the Big Bend." We also had the opportunity to see Walt Disney's delightful presentation of "Beaver Valley."

Tuesday's program was devoted to more panel discussions and to the annual business meeting of members. The convention concluded on Tuesday evening with the annual dinner in the ball room of the Hotel Roosevelt. Here more than 500 people dined and were privileged to see and hear Dr. Alfred M. Bailey, Director, Denver Museum of Natural History, present his delightful motion picture and lecture titled "Stepping Stones in the Pacific."

Although each presentation at the convention was an inspiration in itself, perhaps the greatest value was the realization of the vastness and quality of the excellent program conducted by the National Audubon Society.

Reflections on Running a Feeding Station ... After Ten Years

by Adele Erisman

A brush heap near the feeding station is worth as much as a good established evergreen planting. Too many people try to feed in open windswept places exposing the birds to weather and predators unnecessarily. The best brush heaps are made from discarded balsam Christmas trees. We collect them after Christmas from unsold stock. (They make good mulch for berries too.) The needles last till summer.

Manure spread on the garden in the fall feeds lots of birds with waste grain.

Jays like large chunks of stale bread and dislike feeders with narrow entrances and large overhangs.

Bluebirds sometimes sleep in our birdhouses. The houses should be winterproofed and inspected now and then.

Peanut butter is more useful and more economical when mixed with fat drippings. It won't choke the birds then.

A weed patch, a clump of sumac, greenbrier, evergreens, bayberry, cedar, honeysuckle—these are the common plants that carry our birds over the winter. Need for artificial feeding is just an admission that the land is inhospitable, poorly managed, depleted of cover.

Feeding is fun for us. And an obligation too. Once started

it is a crime to stop till early in May—not even for a day. Some birds can starve without food for 24 hours.

Feeding costs me about \$50 to \$75 a year for (1) sunflower seeds (at 17c a lb.), (2) peanut butter in large jars from the chain stores, (3) millet (at about 13c a lb.). I don't like to use corn or scratch, except large sizes for squirrels and jays, because it will mold and become dangerous. Sand or coal ashes makes a good base for ground feeding and supplies grit as well as good drainage. Mixed feeds are too expensive because they always contain some waste.

Water is terribly important in cold weather even when there's snow. We keep it in a dish in a feeder in a south window where it can be easily replenished and kept thawed. Ice and snow lower the body temperature of the birds and use up needed calories.

Suet cut in small pieces is taken more readily than when left in chunks. Brown creepers seldom leave the trees to feed.

Squirrels, rats, house sparrows are all pests at times. They tax our ingenuity to the breaking point. Squirrels can be foiled with booby traps of chicken wire and metal disks that tip with their weight. Rats come because of ground feeding. We shoot the ones we can get and try to use squill for the others. House sparrows are hopeless. We destroy their nests in the spring and try to get rid of them in that way before they drive the tree swallows away. When chickens are fed carelessly and house sparrows multiply.

I had a yellow-breasted chat all last winter. It lived through but had sore feet in March, a bad sign. Of course it had no business being here at all at that season. It ate orange, apple, suet, crumbs, baked potato, cereal, raisins (well softened first).

Bayberry and bittersweet and weed tops are always kept indoors and put out in March. The bluebirds and myrtle warblers eat them eagerly.

Feeding is a chore as well as a pleasure. I shovel snow away before dawn during blizzards. I couldn't imagine a winter, though, without the birds outside my windows.

For complete discussion of feeding see "Handbook of Attracting Birds" by McElroy.

What's In a Number? 65

One good test of the value of any community organization is its ability to hold and increase its membership. We are happy to report that our figures are getting better every year in this respect. We now have 510 members supporting and benefiting from the Sanctuary's activities. Naturally, we want to see this figure continue to grow. Of this 510 there are only 65 who have not renewed their membership for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1951. If you are one of those 65, won't you please send in your renewal now and help us reduce that figure. Let's bring it down to a big "0" by the next issue of our bulletin.

If we can reduce this figure by a substantial amount between now and the end of our year, we can show the greatest increase in membership this year that our Sanctuary has ever known. A well planned membership drive will soon be launched by our membership committee. Let's give them a clean slate to work with! Send in your renewal now!

Bird Notes

An immature male ROSE-BREADED GROSBEAK is a daily visitor to Mrs. Erisman's feeding station.

The Sanctuary recorded its first YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER a few days ago.

A CATBIRD and a BROWN THRASHER are wintering in the Sanctuary. Their favorite food seems to be the haws of the multiflora rose.

Mrs. Findlay has an abundance of MYRTLE WARBLERS about her feeding station.

Screen Tour Patrons

This year we adopted a new policy endeavoring to put our Screen Tours on a self-paying basis. As you know, we asked our members and friends to become patrons for the programs by subscribing to tickets in the amount of five dollars or more. To date, the response has been most gratifying. The following persons have supported us in this manner. All these names appear on our lecture programs except for a half-dozen or so that we received too late for printing. To each and everyone we wish to express our appreciation for this fine support.

Miss E. Mildred Abbott	Mrs. Williams Haynes
Mr. Tracy A. Adams	Mrs. Anna F. Hewitt
Mrs. Wallace S. Allis	Mrs. Adah C. Hickey
Mr. Jerome Anderson, III	Mr. Carl H. Holdridge
Mrs. Jerome Anderson, III	Mr. and Mrs. G. Holzinger
Mr. Robert P. Anderson	Mr. J. Reid Johnson
Mrs. Robert P. Anderson	Mrs. J. Reid Johnson
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Bates	Mrs. Henry B. Joy
Miss Katharine Blunt	Oliver Wolcott Kenison
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Buffum	Mrs. Cyrus H. Loutrel
Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Chapman	Miss Alice E. Marquardt
Mr. F. H. Chappell	Mrs. Gertrude P. Moon
Mr. Belton A. Copp	Mr. Cyril V. Moore
Mr. A. M. Cottrell, Jr.	Mr. Harold Q. Moore
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Mrs. Donald C. Cottrell	Mrs. Augustus V. Morgan
Miss Louise C. Coy	Miss Margaret S. Morriss
Miss Sallie E. Coy	Mystic Garden Club
Miss Anna M. Culbert	Dr. Frederic C. Paffard
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Miss Pauline H. Dederer	Miss Sarah T. Palmer
Mrs. Frank F. Dodge	Mrs. Agustas Peterla
Mr. and Mrs. Coert du Bois	Mr. Maynard W. Peterson
Mrs. Mary L. Duryea	Mrs. Walter S. Price
Miss Anna Lloyd Ely	Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Savard
Mrs. R. O. Erisman	Mrs. Ralph P. Smith
Mr. John B. Findlay	Mrs. Earle W. Stamm
Mrs. John B. Findlay	Mr. and Mrs. Karl Stillman
Mr. G. A. Ford, Jr.	Mrs. Frank A. Sullivan
Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Fowler	Mrs. Michael Tiziani
Mrs. Ruth K. Gallup	Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Trainer
Mr. George Geer	Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Utter
Mrs. Alfred H. Gildersleeve	Mrs. Clarence A. Vars
Dr. and Mrs. H. P. Gongaware	Mr. Russell H. Waldo
Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Goodwin	Mr. H. Mitchell Wallace
Miss Elizabeth Greenman	Mrs. George E. Watters
Mrs. Henry Gregor	Miss Jessie Watters
Rev. and Mrs. J. H. Groton	Mrs. Henry Whitney
Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Grover	Dr. Charles M. Williams
Dr. Henry L. Haines	Mr. Clarence Wimpfheimer
Mrs. Henry L. Haines	Mrs. Clarence Wimpfheimer
Mr. Williams Haynes	Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Wood
	Miss Edith E. Young

Bird Notes

Mrs. Hatchell's pet Towhee now has the run of the house. It will sit on your head and pull your hair until you feed it—loves to tear up cigarettes, especially under the piano.

DOVEKIES have been reported off Wamphassuc Point. Numerous SAW WHET owls have been reported. Mr. McElroy saw a snowy owl. It was a short distance from the Sanctuary so it's still not on our official bird list.

Few TREE SPARROWS have been recorded to date. Mrs. Erisman reports an abundance of wintering FIELD SPARROWS.

Large flocks of GOLDFINCHES can be noted feeding on this year's abundant crop of birch cones.

The Sanctuary's multiflora roses have attracted several flocks of CEDAR WAXWINGS. BLUEBIRDS and ROBINS can also be seen feeding on the haws.

Handbook of Attracting Birds

Handbook of Attracting Birds, by Thomas P. McElroy, Jr., with illustrations by Lambert Guenther. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, New York. Price \$2.75.

Reviewed by Mrs. A. M. Cottrell, Jr.

The Sanctuary's Curator is a quiet, friendly person who, too often, hides his light under a bushel. To see that light revealed in his writing of the vastly informative "Handbook of Attracting Birds" is an occasion for pleasant and profitable reading plus the personal pride of Tom McElroy's friends in his accomplishment. Under such circumstances the reviewer will have to be forgiven for a certain bias which is not ordinarily within the province of reviewers.

"Handbook for Attracting Birds" is skillfully and engagingly presented, with illustrations by the gifted Stonington artist, Lambert Guenther. The book has been comprehensively thought out and is slanted as much toward practical care and conservation of our wildlife as it is toward appreciation and technical identification of the various local birds. Of special interest are the chapters on attracting birds by suitable planting and available water supply, and there are also essential suggestions as to human help at nesting time and in the field of First Aid. Reminds us of the panicky moments we've known when a baby bird had fallen out of the nest and was thrashing on the ground, with our cat somewhere in the uncomfortably near vicinity.

Unlike many bird books there is nothing drily academic about the Curator's brain-child. It is fresh, entertaining, written simply and expertly and touched with the author's own warm personality.

Winter Bird Census Scheduled For Sunday, January 14

This winter's annual bird census will be held on Sunday, January 14. The purpose of this endeavor is to list the maximum number of wintering species and to note any increase or decrease in population density as compared with previous years. A careful analysis of our findings will appear in the local papers and in the next issue of *Pequot Trails*.

We want as many members as possible to participate in this survey. We particularly want a group to cover the New London area, Mystic-Noank area, and the Westerly area. If you are willing to help with this count, drop Mr. McElroy a note or call him on the phone (Mystic 1260). He will supply you with more detailed information.

If you cannot accompany any of the groups on that day, it would be a help to us if you would keep a careful count of the species observed around your home and phone the results in to Mr. McElroy that evening. Let's beat last year's record!

Local Areas Good For Winter Birding

WATCH HILL AND NAPATREE POINT—Good for all shore and water birds.

LANTERN HILL—Wintering thrushes, grouse, woodpeckers, and other land birds.

CHARLESTOWN POND—Ducks and geese.

MYSTIC RIVER—Ducks, kingfishers, herons, gulls, and others.

MOSQUITO FARM, WEQUETEQUOCK—Ducks, shore, and marsh birds.

MASON'S ISLAND—Land, shore, and water birds.

STONINGTON POINT—Gulls, ducks, loons, cormorants, and other water birds.

MITCHELL'S WOODS, NEW LONDON—Land birds.

BRIDE LAKE, NIAHTIC—Ducks, swans, geese, etc.

FOUR MILE RIVER, ROCKY NECK STATE PARK—Exceptionally good for waterfowl all winter.